

Report on Medical Education - University of Mexico -
Based on Visit to Mexico August 13 - 27, 1923, by
Doctor Alan Gregg

1. LOCATION - The geographical location of the school is near the center of population of the entire country and about equally distant from the larger provincial towns (excepting Merida and Monterrey). The School is located in the city of Mexico in the heart of town at a distance of about two to three miles from the main hospital where clinical work is done. Its town location is in every way unfortunate and ill-considered.
2. HISTORY - In 1580 the first chair of medicine was established in the then very small clerical university and was, of course, hardly more than a title for the professor of natural philosophy and history. After slow growth through the 19th Century the national university was organized in 1910 by the federation of various schools of law, medicine and engineering. During the ten years following, however, the school suffered severely from constant political disturbances. In 1921 the national university was put under the department of public instruction. At no time has the medical school of the university been controlled by educators who were independent of government or clerical control.
3. ORGANIZATION - The University is composed of a combination of the schools of law, medicine, engineering, fine arts and higher studies. To the University the national preparatory schools are closely affiliated as being almost the only source of students and under the control also of the Minister of Public Instruction.

The Minister of Public Instruction is the chief of the University, but the government of the University is detailed to a Rector and a

University Council. The Rector is appointed by the President of the Republic for a term of three years and can succeed himself indefinitely. He cannot, however, be at the same time a director of one of the component schools or a professor in any subject. The Rector's duties consist of (1) presiding over the University Council, (2) supervising the work of the University and the work done in its component schools, (3) after consultation with the University Council and with the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction, the Rector may remove ordinary professors and he may also contract special professors with the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction, (4) to supervise the expenditure of the funds of the University, (5) to issue reports on the progress of University work, and (6) to promote the establishment of definite study courses within the University when he has the agreement of the director of higher studies.

The University Council is composed as follows: the rector; the directors of the component schools of the University and the director of primary education, ex officio; four professors to be named by the Minister of Public Instruction; and ten professors, two for each school, elected by the ordinary professors (ordinarios) by secret ballot from their own faculties; (one half of the above named elected representatives are renewed each year) then one student for each national school, to be chosen among the actual scholars, (renewal each year). Students have only the position of informants and have no vote.

The work of the University Council is (1) to discuss, resolve and bring to the Minister of Public Instruction, after they have been discussed by the faculty of the school concerned, changes in study plans, program, methods of instruction, or examination in any of the component

schools of the University; (2) to create new institutions and new classes where necessary within the University; (3) to organize University extension courses; (4) to approve, modify or refuse the salaries of professors paid for by the government - these are proposed by the directors of the various schools after consultation with their faculties. If approved by the University Council the salary list is submitted to a branch of the national treasury and to the President of the Republic. On his approval the treasury gives its decision. In case of refusal, 2/3 vote brings it directly to the President. (5) To nominate or remove personnel paid for from University funds, (i.e. Funds not supplied by Government). (6) To give opinion on removal of regular professors to the Rector in case they are not doctors of medicine (Professors on government pay are removable only by the federal executive.)

4. UNIVERSITY FINANCES -

The University has two types of funds: (1) funds put at the disposal of the University by the government and not considered the legal property of the University; (2) funds from private or non-governmental sources, and considered legal property of the University. The administration of the private funds is the work of a commission formed by three persons named annually by the University Council. They are obliged to make a report annually to the Rector in regard to the disbursement of the money. 2/3 of the committee must agree in any specific case of disbursement for it to become effective. For amounts above \$5,000 (U.S.) all financial transactions require the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction in addition to that of the University Council. For smaller amounts approval of the Council only is requested. The accounts of the commission controlling the disbursement of private funds are audited annually by another commission

selected by the University Council from among the officials of the treasury and state departments of the federal government. These accounts must be published. No figures were submitted in regard to the general university finances.

5. FINANCES OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL - The salary budget of the Faculty of Medicine for 1922 was in Mexican money \$692,916, divided as follows: Administration \$58,400; teaching \$583,233.50; service \$51,282.50. The analysis of the teaching budget shows the following accounts by departments:

Anatomy	Mex. \$70,919.50
Biology	2,555.
Histology and Microbiology	39,201.
Physiology	15,074.50
Physiological chemistry	9,198.
Pathology and pathological anatomy	41,281.50
Pharmacology	9,672.50
Clinical medicine	75,190.
Clinical surgery	145,270.
Medical therapeutics, physiological therapeutics and nursing	26,535.50
Surgical therapeutics	13,140.
Parasitology and tropical diseases	5,329.
Psychology	4,380.
Legal medicine	5,329.
Obstetrics	59,495.
Pediatrics	4,380.
Ophthalmology	8,760.
Dermatology	8,760.
Hygiene	5,329.
Deontology	1,460.
Laboratory work (clinical pathology) in Juarez Hospital	6,643.
Laboratory work in general hospital	6,643.
Consulting staff	15,330.
Physical education of medical students	2,920.

The above is salary list and does not cover cost of equipment, depreciation, etc., on which no notes were given. The professors are paid upon a basis of hours actually spent in lecturing and not upon a fixed rate of salary per annum.

6. BUILDINGS - The medical school is housed in a large early colonial building originally used as headquarters for the Inquisition. Its space is about that of $1\frac{1}{2}$ of the units of the Harvard Medical School, much of its apparent size being lost in the form of a courtyard in the center of the building. The location is unrelated to that of hospitals in which clinical work is done.

The ground floor is devoted to lecture rooms, offices of the administration. All the rooms are small with the exception of one which has space for about 200. Lighting is poor and the equipment antiquated. There is a gymnasium room opening off a large central court. The second floor is devoted to class rooms and improvised laboratories. Large amounts of apparatus are stored in wall cases. The laboratory and the museum also are on the second floor. The third floor contains a few small lecture rooms, improvised laboratories, and a small animal house on part of the roof. Plans of the buildings were requested but have not yet been furnished.

7. LABORATORY FACILITIES - Anatomy - The anatomy laboratory has 12 tables; specimens kept in brine; dissection of entire body required of each student. Room fairly well lighted, but it is difficult to imagine how classes can be accommodated with so small a number of tables even though anatomy is continued through two years. Textbooks for reference during dissection not in evidence. No frozen sections; a few charts; no manikins seen.

Histology - Taught separately from physiology. Students not obliged to make their own sections though each has a microscope. Loan collections it was said are furnished each student.

Physiology - Apparently a large amount of equipment in very

crowded quarters. Instructors work by preparing demonstrations for groups of five to ten students. During one such demonstration no notes were being taken by the students.

Chemistry laboratory - Not seen; methods not discussed..

Pathology - Said to be taught with loan collections as is histology. Each student furnished with a microscope.

Museum - Easily accessible to students; greatly overcrowded; fair number of wax models of pathological and anatomical preparations from Vasseur, Paris; excellent bone preparations. The diener for the museum prepares and sells skeletons for Kny Scherer & Company. Museum apparently not used to furnish material for illustrating lectures in other parts of the building.

Goodman informed AG that laboratory work in all courses was very deficient. Students arrive at medical school with very little preparation in chemistry, biology or physics and this deficiency continues. Goodman attempted to do experimental study on pulque, but was much hampered by lack of apparatus, material, and comprehension on part of the professors.

8. CLINICAL FACILITIES - The population of Mexico City given as 615,000 is in reality nearer 1,000,000 because of numerous contributory outlying towns which are indistinguishable from the city proper.

General Hospital - Cases in medicine, surgery and obstetrics; between 600 and 650 beds; only one private ward of 30 beds; nearly all the clinical instruction for the school is given here although the hospital is not controlled by the school. The staff of the hospital is composed in part of professors in the medical school. There are 28 pavilions on

the unit system. The teaching is deficient by reason of youth and inexperience of the instructing staff. Professors do not give the majority of the instruction and exercise only a very little control over instruction given by younger assistants. Direction of the school is in the hands of politicians. It is possible for students to have the position of practicanes at the general hospital, receiving 120 pesos a month from Mexican Red Cross. For these practicanes considerable clinical experience begins as in French hospitals at the outset of the course in medicine. Autopsies are easily obtained at the hospital but inadequately worked up.

Hospital Jesus - 80 beds used largely by gynecology and outpatient department and to limited extent by students. Founded by Cortez in 1528. Antiquated in administration and inelastic in its adaptation to teaching needs of the school.

Morelos - 200 beds; venereal diseases for women; used relatively little for teaching purposes.

Juarez - 250 to 300 beds for accident and police cases with a few maternity cases.

Students work largely on their own responsibility at their own choice in these hospitals, beginning to have clinical experience from the beginning of their course. Only in general hospital is residency on part of practicanes in vogue.

9. LIBRARY FACILITIES - Library about 10,000 volumes with between 20 and 30 periodicals. General appearance is that of a private collection zealously guarded by an old man suspicious of the motives of those who visit the library. A small collection is accessible to students for use in the library and a smaller collection, of which no note was kept, exists

for lending books to poor students. The lighting is poor; the reading room open 9 to 12 in the morning and 3 to 6 in the afternoon. The balance of volumes is as follows:

Anatomy	546	Chemistry	262
Physiology	442	Minerology	103
Pathology	851	Education	172
Gynecology, obstetrics and pediatrics	300	Pharmacology	400
Legal medicine	331	Public and private hygiene	192
Physiology	69	History, biography and "medical literature"	145
Botany	73		
Dictionaries of medicine	420		

As an example of the general character of the library books in pathology, 851 in number, in all were found to be divided as follows: Number of books edited later than 1914, 216; number of books between 1910 and 1914, 43; previous to 1910, 592. In physiology no books were found dated later than 1914.

10. FACULTY - Names by departments were requested but not furnished.

All the faculty engage in private practice.

11. THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS for the school are a diploma from one of the national preparatory schools and special approval is necessary in case preparatory studies are taken in any other school. The national preparatory schools vary considerably in value and thoroughness of preparation according to what state they are in. For program of studies see p. 16 of Codigo Universitario. Secondary students are admitted to the medical school with widely differing qualifications.

12. FEES OF STUDENTS - Regular instruction fee is 15 pesos (\$7) per semester. In addition to this in order to take the final examinations 100 pesos are required as special fee. Publication of thesis is not required.

13. DEGREES - The degree of M. D. may be granted at the termination of

the required course or as an academic honor in any special instance or ex officio to the officials of the medical school. In ordinary academic life the honorary and ex officio degrees are not common. No other degrees than that of M. D. are given by the medical school.

14. COURSES - The school year is of 42 weeks; the number of hours per week in each year are as follows: 1st year, 16 hours; 2nd year, 18 hours; 3rd year, 22 hours; 4th year, 23 hours; 5th year, $24\frac{1}{2}$ hours. For the plan of studies see page 46 of the Codigo Universitario.

15. NUMBER OF STUDENTS - 500 to 600.

16. SOURCE OF STUDENTS - A few students come from outside Mexico. Guatemala furnishes the majority of these. Of those coming from the different states of Mexico, the largest number come from the federal district and the adjoining states. No figures were available on this point.

17. DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES - Distribution of graduates is widely over Mexico. No school in Mexico can compare with the medical school at Mexico City in this regard. In the small provincial towns the doctor in practice does not fail to have on his shingle the fact that he is a graduate of the Faculty of Medicine of Mexico City. None of the provincial schools commands the same prestige.

18. THE MEDICAL SCHOOL of the national University of Mexico is easily the most important in the Republic. The other schools are as follows:

School of Medicine of Guadalajara

"	"	"	"	Merida
"	"	"	"	Monterrey
"	"	"	"	Oaxaca
"	"	"	"	Puebla
"	"	"	"	Michoacan
"	"	"	"	San Luis Potosi

National School of Homeopathy in Mexico City

Free School of Homeopathy in Mexico City

Military Medical School in Mexico City

19. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS by staff during the five past years requested, but not furnished.

The above information was secured from conversations with Doctor Manuel Gea Gonzalez, Dean of the Medical Faculty; Doctor Alfonso Pruneda, Public Health Department; Doctor Albert Goodman, graduate of the School and of Columbia; Doctor Angel de la Garza Brito, a teacher in the school detailed to look after Dr. F. F. Russell during his visit in Mexico City; and from theCodigo Universitario of the University of Mexico for 1922. The outline for report on medical schools was left with Doctor Gonzalez with the explanation that the Division of Medical Education was interested in securing the information referred to in the outline from all medical schools throughout the world and that it would be considered a great favor if Doctor Gonzalez could arrange to furnish the information requested. This he promised to do. No reply, however, has been received from him to date.

October 22, 1923.